

Message Text

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16

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSCE-00 SAJ-01 SAM-01 AGR-05 EB-07

COME-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 OC-05 CCO-00 /091 W

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R 110635Z AUG 75

FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4191

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR CH

SUBJECT: FLOODS IN KWANGTUNG

1. USLO OFFICER TRAVELLING FROM HONG KONG TO CANTON

IS NOTED SERIOUS, THOUGH RELATIVELY LOCALIZED, FLOODING IN RICE GROWING AREAS EAST OF CANTON. IT WAS EVIDENT THAT RECENT RAINS HAD RAISED WATER IN THE AREA OF THE TUNG CHIANG RIVER TO A VERY HIGH LEVEL. WATER CONTROL SYSTEMS SEEMED FOR THE MOST PART TO BE CONTAINING THE FLOOD DAMAGE, BUT BUNDS BETWEEN PADDIES WERE BEGINNING TO BREAK DOWN IN SOME FIELD, WHERE FLOODING HAD OCCURRED IT WAS THE WORST THE OFFICER HAD OBSERVED IN A NUMBER OF SIMILAR TRIPS (OFTEN IN RAINY WEATHER) OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. ON ARRIVAL IN CANTON THE OFFICER LEARNED THAT RAIL SERVICE TO PEKING HAD BEEN SUSPENDED FOR 2-3 DAYS DUE TO FLOODS NORTH OF THE CITY.

2. IN ADDITION TO PROBLEMS WITH CURRENT HIGH WATER

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LEVELS, THE CANTON REGION APPARENTLY HAS HAD TO COPE

WITH UNUSUALLY HEAVY RAINFALL FOR MUCH OF THIS YEAR. A BRITISH EMBASSY OFFICER WHO VISITED A COMMUNE NORTH-WEST OF THE CITY LAST WEEK WAS TOLD BY COMMUNE OFFICIALS THAT THERE HAD BEEN TOO MUCH RAIN DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 1975 AND THAT THE COMMUNE'S ENTIRE FIRST PEANUT CROP HAD BEEN LOST AS A RESULT. THE OFFICIAL DID NOT MENTION ANY ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE RICE CROP, THOUGH IN AN ASIDE HE DID COMPLAIN THAT LACK OF FERTILIZER WAS HURTING RICE PRODUCTION IN HIS AREA.

3. COMMENT: AS INDICATED, WATER CONTROL SYSTEMS SEEMED TO BE HANDLING THE CURRENT RAIN PROBLEM EAST OF CANTON REASONABLY WELL, BUT WE IMAGINE THE SITUATION NORTH OF THE CITY IS MORE SERIOUS IF RAIL SERVICE CANNOT BE MAINTAINED. OVERALL, THIS YEAR'S RAINY WEATHER HAS PROBLEBLY HAD AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON KWANGTUNG'S AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT, THOUGH AT THIS POINT WE HAVE NO WAY OF JUDGING THE EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE.
BUSH

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